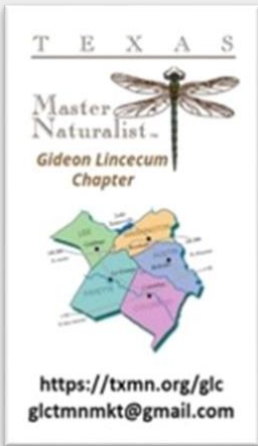


# The GLC Tidings

DECEMBER 2023

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### Our Mission

Volunteers dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources through education, outreach, and service in our community.

### Newsletter Entry Deadlines

1<sup>st</sup> day of even Months

Send articles or photos to  
[glcnwsltr@gmail.com](mailto:glcnwsltr@gmail.com)

### SAVE THE DATES

Board Meeting – 10/27/2023

Chapter Meeting – 11/18/2023

## From the President



### Sheri Wilcox

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. We had a very quiet Thanksgiving at our house this year, leaving lots of time for reflecting on what we have to be thankful for this year. Among these are all of you, who volunteer your time and talents to serve our chapter.

We elected new officers for 2024-2025 at our November chapter meeting. I would like to thank our three outgoing officers. Norbert Dittrich, our outgoing Vice President, has quietly and faithfully booked venues for all our events and kept us all apprised of a growing number of advanced training programs. Patti Brown's was often the first face each of you saw as you came to our meetings. Always there with a cheerful word for everyone, Patti has been a delight to work with as secretary these past two years. David Hessel stepped up to assume the treasurer's role three years ago. David has kept us in good graces with our tax filings and financial statements. I would be remiss if I did not mention that David has been supported ably by his wife Lori, who likewise has my gratitude.

I also thank our three incoming officers for saying "yes" when asked to take on a leadership position. Swee Leng Rapatz, our new Vice President, has already brought her rapid-fire spirit to a number of TMN activities. I have worked with her with pleasure at Washington-on-the-Brazos and on our training committee. Betty Scardino is our incoming Secretary. I have enjoyed watching Betty in action at many of our educational events. Karen Dean is our new treasurer. A member of the Class of 2023, Karen has jumped into chapter activities, volunteering at educational events and willingly accepting our invitation to serve as treasurer.

In addition to our officers, both outgoing and incoming, I want to thank everyone who has assumed a new leadership role or continues to serve in a leadership role as a member of our Board of Directors or as a project or committee leader. Our chapter cannot function without the many people who have said "yes."

## From the President (continued)



We wound up our chapter meetings for 2023 in November with three inspiring advanced training presentations. Annalee Epps, who many of us know as the Mill Creek Watershed Protection Plan coordinator, but whose degree is in soil science, led us through the basics of soil science, complete with a hands-in-the-mud demonstration of ribbon testing your soil.

Class of 2023 members Shirley and John Isbell wrapped up our new member presentations for the year with two interesting talks on riparian restoration. I expect that many of us related to their descriptions of the detritus from 200 years of human habitation and were inspired by their enthusiasm for putting their piece of Texas on an ecologically sounder footing.

Our Volunteer Recognition Gathering on December 10<sup>th</sup> will be a wonderful opportunity to gather to celebrate all our accomplishments in 2023. We will reprise the highlights of the year as well as eat a lot of good food and catch up with friends we don't see every day. I hope to see many of you there.

With gratitude to each of you and with anticipation of what 2024 will bring, I close with the words of the Roman statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others."

Sheri

**THANK YOU FOR  
VOLUNTEERING**

## State Information



#TMNTuesday [#TMNTuesdays \(tamu.edu/tmntuesdays\)](https://tamu.edu/tmntuesdays)

December 12, 12-1 PM

Speaker: Steve Nelle

Topic: Land Stewardship – It Might Not Be What You Think

[Register Here](#)



### 25th Anniversary Storytelling Project

To celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we are hosting a year-long storytelling project to highlight our wonderful TMN members and their conservation volunteer work across the state.

We want to know! What inspired you to become a TMN member? Do you have a favorite TMN in-the-field memory? What has been your most meaningful project, community outreach, or conservation event? What does nature mean to you? Learn More: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/blog/25th-anniversary-storytelling-project/#storytelling>



### TMN License Plate - Order YOURS Today!!!

ANYONE can purchase this plate and \$22 of each \$30 annual plate fee comes directly back to the Texas Master Naturalist Program for continuing our mission.

The plate is available for purchase on the website:

Personalized plate (\$70): <https://www.myplates.com/design/personalized/passenger/texas-master-naturalist/>

Non-Personalized plate (\$30): <https://www.myplates.com/design/background/passenger/texas-master-naturalist/>

# Membership Memo



**By Chris Morrison, Membership Director**

Things that come up from time to time are what I'm talking about today.

When we log an entry in VMS, a short description of the activity needs to be written in the box provided.

1. There is a limit of **255 characters** (including punctuation and spaces), so your description needs to be concise. You can type in all you want to, but VMS will cut off what it records after 255 characters, so no one will see anything past that point.
2. Generally, please **do not use acronyms** except for these few: TPWD, AgriLife, TxDOT, NRCS, and USDA. You may know what NPAT means, for example, but the auditors probably won't. (Abbreviate, something like: Nat Prairie Assn of TX – note that I didn't put periods). If the name of the organization is listed as a part of the title of the opportunity, then you may use an acronym in your description or not name it at all because the auditors already know.
3. Please do put a description for each entry, even if it's only the location of the chapter meeting. (Not necessary to list each item of business taken up.)
4. If you are adding travel time, please write "**plus travel**" at the end of description.

Google Groups have some little quirks that can be frustrating.

1. Each person is added to the GLC member Google Group with the email address provided to us when we add you to the group. You will receive an email from the group telling you that you've been added. If you change your email, be sure to let the Google Group administrator (currently me) know so you will be updated in the group.
2. If you want to SEND an email through the G Group, you must *send it from the email that is listed for you in the group*. Otherwise, you won't be able to access the group. Not sure which of your emails is listed in our group? Click on your name in a recent email sent out to all in our group and it will show you.
3. If you SEND an email to the Google Group, *you will not receive that email*. It will be in your sent mail, but a copy of it will not come to your inbox. If you want it to also come to your inbox, put your own email in the CC or BCC line.

Newer TMNs have a unique opportunity to get two certification pins in the same year. This can only happen once in your TMN life. When you log at least 40 volunteer and 8 AT hours (doesn't include Training Class sessions) you will receive your Initial Certification pin (green dragonfly) and a certificate. Let's say you earned that pin in July. If you go on to log an additional 40 volunteer and 8 AT *in that same year*, you will be awarded the annual recertification pin for that year (Tx Ecoregions for 2023). We have already had several newer members earn both this year.

Speaking of Initial Certification, your hours will carry over to the next year if you don't earn Initial Certification the same year as you finish the Training Class. Hours can't carry over for the annual recertification pin – they all must be logged in one calendar year.

## Education Team News

By Karen Gardner, Education Director



The GLC Education Team and Friends recently held a first ever **Birding Festival** at San Felipe de Austin Historic Site (SFAHS), along with the live demonstrations of *Historic Careers, Crafts and Occupations*. Frank Michel made the initial connection with Bryan McAuley, Site Manager for San Felipe.

The GLC Team created several new educational activities and games with a Birding theme. Charlene Koehler and Sheri Wilcox did a *Landscaping for Birds* that was beautifully decorated with examples of native plants. *Making Seed Balls* was done by Carey Soderstrom, BR Koehler and Nita Tiemann which is a great family activity and involves some sensory and messy experiences. Ken English and Sheri developed the *Matching Birds and Their Nests* game learning about nests and matching them with their avian creators. Ken has that magnetic touch of bringing people in and engaging with them to learn about GLC and Texas Master Naturalists.

Lori Buffum and Karen Gardner worked on displays for *Bird Identification* with lots of photos, models of feet and examples of resources. The educational materials focused on categories such as learning about silhouettes, the variety of tails, beaks and feet and starting with basic identification by primary color. The display included an activity for matching birds by their basic color. Lori has a knack for educating people and engaging with various ages to get them involved.

We set up the *Migration Journey Game* run by Karen Bookout and Jaci Elliott. The activity is adapted from the **Flying Wild** book. Participants move through 24 stations learning about condition and situations that can affect whether a bird is successful or not when they migrate. There were bird style airplanes for playing tokens. Scott Maddox led *Bird Habitat Hikes* on a trail to show people where to look for birds. Very helpful to the Team to have Scott with his excellent birding knowledge.

Karen Gardner and Chris Morrison did a *Jeop-Birdy Game* that is also adapted from Flying Wild. It uses an online template that matches the format of the TV version of Jeopardy. It had several columns of answers such as “Bird Words, Avian Adaptations, etc.” and it played the Jeopardy theme music which made it really fun. Participants choose a category see an Answer and have to come up with the Question. Diane Kies had a table with information about the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Eagle Lake.

Debra Healy was the official GLC Greeter stationed at the front of the Visitor Center. She has a real talent for welcoming people and sharing information about GLC and the activities of the day. Jim Kelley and John Gardner did a variety of jobs helping set up and run several stations when needed. Along with presenting on occupations at the Print Shop for San Felipe, Frank Michel set up a monitor showing the data from November 4<sup>th</sup> on *Bird Cast*. Frank picked this date because it was Gideon Lindecum’s birthdate. The data shows how many birds are on the move at a given time. Karen Gardner did a power point presentation on *Birds – Who, What, When, Where and Why* as an introduction to the Birding Festival.

This event had low attendance primarily due to poor weather – it was cloudy and misty. Scott gave it a positive spin when he said that it made a great dress rehearsal and he’s right! GLC now has a well-

organized **Birding Festival** with a menu of great activities that are adaptable to a variety of events and age ranges. Thank you to the dedicated GLC Educational Team and Friends for making this a success.



## Volunteering Highlights



### Winedale Pollinator Garden Project

Carey Soderstrom & Carol (CJ) Claverie



As the new co-project leaders for the Winedale Pollinator Garden, and new Texas Master Naturalists, Class of '23, C.J. Claverie and I are thrilled for the opportunity to contribute, learn, and commune with nature and our fellow Master Naturalists. Located in front of the Visitor's Center of the Winedale Historical Complex, part of the University of Texas' Briscoe Center for American History, the Winedale Pollinator Garden was created as a GLC Texas Master Naturalist Project in 2017.

Site Manager for the historical complex, Tricia Blakistone, commented that visitors are excited about seeing both new and familiar species of plants, and all are appreciative of the volunteers who keep the project going. Tim Meier, who installed the irrigation system at the garden's inception and lives nearby, has helped repair and restore the system, which is fed by well water.

My childhood "Snow White" fantasy was in part fulfilled when I first stepped into the Winedale Pollinator Garden this past August; the small, irrigated oasis hummed with bees, birds, and butterflies, and although there were no friendly forest creatures in view, I felt like singing.

C.J. and I are grateful to the knowledgeable and hard-working volunteers who have helped us during our workdays (the second Friday of each month) and look forward to more help in the future.





### Why Does It Look Like That?

From Marvelyn Granger

When we moved to Austin County a year and a half ago, we knew we wanted to be good stewards of the land and make the best home for pollinators and songbirds. That's it—that's about all we knew, so as closing day approached, we set out to learn what this meant and how to accomplish it.

A few months after we moved in I received a lovely text from the local realtor, "Just drove by and the property looks terrific!" We laugh that she must be driving by more recently and can't muster the words for how it looks now. Drought aside, we are in the midst of a full restoration of 11 acres and the process is the kind of beauty only a mother of conservation could love.



### What Is a Native Prairie Restoration?

The prairies of North America were once 200 million acres of grassland. What can seem like "just grass" is a very complex ecosystem that wildlife relies on for food and shelter. Less than one percent of that native habitat remains, replaced by lawns, commercial agriculture, and urbanization. A native prairie restoration can include several practices that turn back the clock including stewarding large prairies, managing small tracts, and even planting natives in an urban yard landscape.

### Why Do We Care?

Prairie restoration enhances the environment. It increases the abundance of native plants, increases ecological diversity, and absorbs a lot of rain, reducing erosion and runoff. All of these elements depend on each other and are crucial to a healthy habitat for native animals and insects, including pollinators. "Our native pollinators are far superior to honey bees..." according to Professor Bryan Danforth, an entomologist at Cornell University. Danforth added. "Honeybees are more interested in the nectar. They do not want the pollen if they can avoid it. The wild, native bees are mostly pollen collectors. They are collecting the pollen to take back to their nests."

Also, native bees are more efficient at pollinating native plants, while honeybees are better with crops and invasive, non-native weeds.

**And why is this important to us?** There are at least 1,100 native bee species in Texas, possibly up to 1,500. They are the primary pollinators of native plants. Three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and about 35 percent of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. That's one out of every three bites of food you eat.



## What to Watch For

Settlers turned the productive soils of the prairie into farmland and later into urban areas, lawns, industry, etc. Large grazers such as caribou and bison, important to land disturbance and rotation, were removed or displaced. Fire, which is one of the most important parts of maintaining a prairie, was suppressed. So we plan to utilize methods over several years such as:

- Mechanical disturbance (disking & mowing)
- Chemical disturbance
- Fire (prescribed burn)
- Seeding

Everyone's plan will look different depending on acreage, historical uses, and goals. Seeing a variety of approaches and asking a lot of questions is invaluable. We look forward to hearing about your plans as we continue to learn. We also invite you to follow the progress of our restoration, including a video of our recent prescribed burn, and encourage your questions and suggestions.

<https://nelliegailranchtexas.com/prairiestory>



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## We had a turkey for Thanksgiving

From Susan Vanderworth

She is a Rio Grande Wild Turkey hen (*Meleagis gallopavo intermedia*). She showed up on our property in early November and stayed with us for about 2 weeks. We named her Pearl because her grayish-blue head reminded me of a natural pearl. And when you said her name, it sounded like the purring noise she would make when contented.

Pearl would show up near our back porch most mornings and I would put out a handful of treats; beauty berry and farkleberry that I had collected for her. From my kitchen, I found she liked



chopped apple, grapes and raisins. Turkeys are omnivores and she enjoyed a grasshopper I caught for her. About half an hour before sundown, she would disappear to roost for the night. Once, I witnessed her flying up into a tall oak. It was surprising to see how easily she got off the ground.

We kept our distance as to not scare her off. But we soon found she was seeking out our company. My husband walked down to the pond to fish, and there went Pearl to shadow him. If I was digging in a flowerbed, I might look up to see her just a few feet away watching me. We even have a video from the rear facing dash cam of Pearl chasing the truck as we pulled down our driveway. "Don't leave me alone!" Or was she just attracted to the shiny truck bumper?

Wild turkeys usually live in flocks (also called rafters). So why was she all alone? I speculate that the rest of her group was killed somehow. Or she got separated from them and is lost. Hens will go off alone to lay eggs in the springtime. Then she and her poults will rejoin a group. But this is the wrong time of year for egg laying.

She stayed through Thanksgiving. But then suddenly disappeared. After 2 days of no Pearl, we were pleased to hear that she is now on our neighbor's adjoining property. According to our neighbor who has 8-10 chickens, she has joined up with them and enjoys the free ranging company. He reports that she is not really accepted - but tolerated by the chickens.

I wonder if she will remain in our area through the winter. Maybe in the spring, she will hear the call of a tom and find a flock. I truly think that her instinct to be with others for protection was why we were able to observe and enjoy her company. She helped make our Thanksgiving 2023 one to remember!

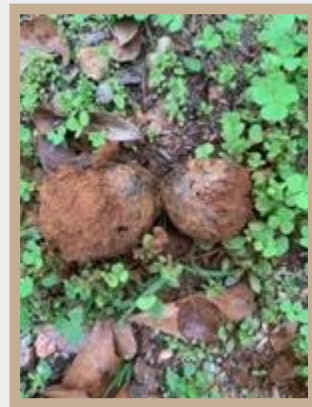
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## Dyeball Fungus

From Scott Maddox, Posted to TMN-GLC Chapter FaceBook Group, Dec 3, 2023

iNaturalist tells me this is *Pisolithus arrhizus*. Its traditional use as a source of dye led to it acquiring the common name Dyeball. It is also called Deadman's Foot fungus and Horse Dung fungus. The immense power of its coordinated hyphae allows a Dyeball to push its way through an asphalt covered road.

The Dyeball fungus is a major component in mycorrhizal fungus mixtures that are used in gardening as powerful root stimulators.





## The Spider Who Lives in the Bluestem

From Lori Buffum

We're almost buddies  
This green lynx spider and me  
Pondside in bluestem

I first met *Peucetia viridans* in the summer as she hunted around the stalks of bushy bluestem grass at the edge of our pond. As summer turned to fall and the grass began to "bloom" with its delicate seed heads expanding, I found her at the top of one of those grass heads where she had bound the tips together with webbing. Several visits later I saw her egg sack burst open with myriad end-of-a-pin sized babies crawling every direction amongst the soft seed heads. Each time I looked for her, she was still on the same head of grass, like today, December 3rd, tending to her home and her brood. If you zoom in, you can see several youngsters on the stem. Good wishes to Mom and all the little ones!

Here's a fun article about the green lynx: <https://www.treehugger.com/green-lynx-spider-facts-5080278>



## This and That



### BirdNote

from Jaci Elliott

If you spend any time listening public radio, whether in your garden or in your car, I have a recommendation for you.

And you don't even have to be a (serious) birder to be a fan.

National Public Radio hosts a daily program called **BirdNote**. A cheery, woodwind-scored theme music opens this a 2-minute show, which in its own words: “tells vivid, sound-rich stories about birds and the challenges they face in order to inspire listeners to care about the natural world - and take steps to protect it.”

The November 25 episode was on the Common Redpoll, whose tiny size defies its survivability in cold climates, as it doesn't tend to migrate and has a specially expanded esophagus, which allows it to daily eat up to 40% of its body weight in seeds.

Previous episodes in November featured a new study on the songs of female songbirds and the ingenuity of jays.

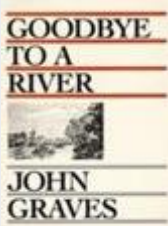
BirdNote airs periodically on Austin's NPR station, KUT, 90.5 FM, so I recommend signing up for their weekly newsletter, the BirdNote Daily, where “each Friday, you will receive all of the BirdNote Daily episodes for the upcoming week, along with BirdNote news, long-form podcast release announcements, and other information about bird-related events” ... like this goofy challenge on Thursday, November 30, 2023. Noteworthy, indeed!



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## Book Review: Goodbye to a River: A Narrative by John Graves

From Carol Gaskamp



I learned of this book when completing the Texas Water Specialists curriculum and was intrigued by the notion of someone taking a farewell canoe trip on a river that was about to change due to dam construction. My local library had a copy of the book, so I went along on the journey. [John Graves](#) wrote numerous articles and several books “about Texas rural life, nature, and the environment” according to his July 2013 obituary in the [Houston Chronicle](#). In *Goodbye to a River*, Graves relates his encounters with nature and the people who lived along the upper Brazos River as he traveled from Possum Kingdom Dam to Lake Whitney in north central Texas. He also reflects on earlier inhabitants, explorers, and settlers, and how they may have been influenced by living along the Brazos. He took the 3-week trip in November 1957, with his only companion a dachshund puppy. The book won the 1961 Carr P. Collins Award of the Texas Institute of Letters and has been credited with fewer dams being built on the river than what had been proposed.

Graves, John. (1959). *Goodbye to a River*. The Curtis Publishing Company. ISBN 0-932012-75-2

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### GLC Tidings Newsletter Index

<https://txmn.org/glc/whats-new/newsletters/>

Find information about articles for newsletter issues from 2018 through the most recent. For each article, the index cites the subject, title, author, and the hyperlink directly to the issue published on the chapter website.

## Events Calendar Snapshot

- Dec 9 – [Christmas at Winedale - birdfeeders](#)
- Dec 10 – [Holiday Gathering, Fayette Co AgriLife Extension](#)
- Dec 12 – [TMN Tuesday](#)
- Dec 14- [Quail Necropsy at Brenham Jr High](#)



See the [Event Calendar](#) for workdays at various project sites and January 2024 events

# Helpful References: Know Your Soil

## Know Your Soil

The November Chapter meeting guest speaker was “Know Your Soil: A Primer in Social Science”. Below are a few selected resources on soil.

### Texas AgriLife Extension Resources

- **Know Your Texas Soils** <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/know-your-texas-soils/01t4x000004PBilAAG> (free download)
- **Soil Analysis** <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/asset-local/soil-analysis/>
- **Field Method for Determining Soil Texture** (4-page pdf is \$2.00). Brochure includes information on five classes of soil texture and how to identify the texture in the field. <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/field-method-for-determining-soil-texture/01t4x000002dF6YAAU>

### Other Resources

- **Web Soil Survey** <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>  
Provides soil data and information in local regions
- **SoilWeb** <https://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/soilweb-apps/>  
Smart Phone Apps Available through Apple app store and Google Play
- **Menoken Farm and Burleigh County Soil Conservation District**, Bismark, ND.  
The focus of this demonstration farm is advancing soil health, and the website provides a variety of resources for learning more about soil, including podcasts and videos.
  - [www.menokenfarm.com](http://www.menokenfarm.com)
  - <https://menokenfarm.com/podcast/>
  - <https://menokenfarm.com/videos-2/>
- **Native Prairie Association of Texas – Fayette Chapter**  
Video: “Soil Carbon in Natural and Restored Lands”, 11/11/2021 presentation (30 minutes) by Elizabeth M. Bach, PhD of the Nature Conservancy, Illinois <https://texasprairie.org/soil-carbon-in-natural-and-restored-lands/>

## Chapter Resources

### Officers for 2023

President – [Sheri Wilcox](#)

Vice President – [Norbert Dittrich](#)

Secretary – [Patti Brown](#)

Treasurer – [David Hessel](#)

### Board Members

Advanced Training Director – [Norbert Dittrich](#)

Communications Director – [Lori Buffum](#)

Marketing Director – [Ken English](#)

Membership Director – [Chris Morrison](#)

Training Class Director – [Connie Shortes](#)

Volunteer Service Projects Director – [Jaci Elliott](#)

Education Director – [Karen Gardner](#)

Chapter State Representative – Sheri Wilcox

Immediate Past President – Betsy Palkowsky

Advisor – [Kara Matheny](#) (Washington County Texas AgriLife)

### Committees and Contacts

Hospitality Chair – Nita Tiemann

Newsletter Editor – [Carol Gaskamp](#)

Website Editor – Sheri Wilcox

Grants and Donations Chair – Mary Ann Butler

### Volunteer Project Leaders

Adopt-a-Highway – Mary Ann Butler and Jaci Elliott

Agricultural Safety Days – Karen Gardner

Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR – Susan Vanderworth

Colorado River Watch – Annette Holdeman, Nita Tiemann

Family Science Nights – Lori Buffum

Indian Creek Nature Area – Ann Ray

LaGrange AgriLife Building Native Plant

Landscape – Cindy Rodibaugh

Monument Hill State Historic Site — Karen Woods

Prescribed Burning – Mark Brown and B.R. Koehler

Schubert House Pollinator Project – Karen Woods

Stephen F. Austin State Park – Tom Shaughnessy

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site –

Julie Itz and David Itz

Winedale Trails and Pollinator Garden – CJ Claverie

### Sponsor Contact

Each county has its own TPWD Biologist and Texas AgriLife Extension agent. We work closely with these sponsors.

Use the following links to access the main county contacts working with our chapter.

[\*Austin County\*](#)

[\*Colorado County\*](#)

[\*Fayette County\*](#)

[\*Washington County\*](#)

[\*Lee County\*](#)



- **Our Chapter Website** <http://txmn.org/glc>
- **GLC Facebook Group** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21969044537/>
- **Volunteer Management System**; log your hours <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/tmn-vms-users>
- **Texas Master Naturalist Program Website** <https://txmn.tamu.edu/>
- **Texas Master Naturalist Listserv**; get notices about activities across the state <mailto:TMN@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU> [LISTSERV - Subscription Management - LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU](#)

### Contact Us

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